Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Globalisation, Societies and Education

ISSN: 1476-7724 (Print) 1476-7732 (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/cgse20

'One step forward, two steps back': labour market integration paths of highly-skilled refugees in Sweden

Ioanna Blasko

To cite this article: Ioanna Blasko (2025) 'One step forward, two steps back': labour market integration paths of highly-skilled refugees in Sweden, Globalisation, Societies and Education, 23:3, 669-682, DOI: 10.1080/14767724.2023.2242279

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2023.2242279

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

Published online: 01 Aug 2023.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 1517

View related articles

View Crossmark data

Citing articles: 5 View citing articles

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=cgse20

GLOBALISATION, SOCIETIES AND EDUCATION
2025, VOL. 23, NO. 3, 669–682
https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2023.2242279

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

OPEN ACCESS Check for updates

'One step forward, two steps back': labour market integration paths of highly-skilled refugees in Sweden

Ioanna Blasko

Department of Human Geography, Uppsala University, Uppsala, Sweden

ABSTRACT

This article explores the labour market integration of highly-skilled refugees seeking employment by comparing the structural landscape that refugees encounter with their degree of knowledgeable agency. The material analysed comprises informational texts and videos, observations, and interviews with labour market integration actors in Sweden. The structural landscape and its complex web of actors create opportunities to obtain employment, but also create constraints. Although refugees can exercise agency on their labour market path, it is difficult to acquire the knowledgeable agency needed for making informed decisions. The policy implications of these findings are significant because labour market integration paths for highly-skilled refugees in Sweden are often unclear and vary across time and space, leading to path gaps and career changes that could be avoided through more knowledge about their options.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 31 October 2022
Accepted 26 July 2023

KEYWORDS
Knowledgeable agency; structural landscape; highly skilled; refugees; labour market integration; Sweden

Introduction

Refugees' inclusion into the labour market has been a topic of significant interest in Europe, especially following the increased influx of refugees in the middle of the last decade (see e.g., Calmfors and Sánchez-Gassen 2019; Federico and Baglioni 2021; van Riemsdijk and Axelsson 2021). Sweden is a good case in point. The year 2015 saw the largest number of asylum-seekers ever received during one year in Sweden (Statistics Sweden 2020) and one of the highest per capita of any European state in that year (Eurostat 2016). For refugees who had completed their tertiary education before arrival—of which there were more than one third in 2019 (Statistics Sweden 2021) — the following years were marked by a period of having diplomas validated, participating in complementary study programmes and fast-tracks for foreign academics, or receiving a Swedish professional license allowing them to practice their profession.

Although employment is viewed as one of the most important factors for reduced mental distress for refugees, on the one hand (Tinghög et al. 2017), and for a successful integration process, on the other (Ager and Strang 2008), research has shown that migrants' paths to employment are particularly difficult and long, especially for migrants with a refugee background (Bevelander 2020; Brell, Dustmann, and Preston 2020; Fasani, Frattini, and Minale 2022). Refugees spend a longer period obtaining employment than other groups (e.g., Diedrich et al. 2020; Ruiz and Vargas-Silva 2016 referencing Delmi 2018; Wikström and Sténs 2019) and have lower wage and employment levels than other migrants and people born in Sweden.

CONTACT Ioanna Blasko ioanna.blasko@kultgeog.uu.se

© 2023 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent.

Moreover, it takes several years for refugees to 'catch up' with the employment rates of other migrants (Bevelander 2020; Brell, Dustmann, and Preston 2020). Foreign-born workers in Sweden are also significantly more likely to have a job that does not match their level of education (Bevelander 2020; Statistics Sweden 2019).

Difficulties with employment have been associated in previous studies with obstacles related to (i) a lack of social networks and contacts (Diedrich et al. 2020; Statistics Sweden 2019, citing Andersson and Hammarstedt 2015; Bevelander 2011; Segendorf and Teljosuo 2011); (ii) the experience of structural and individual discrimination or racism (De los Reyes and Kamali 2005; Diedrich et al. 2020; Knocke 2000; Mesfin and Mamuye 2020, 134, citing Schwarz); (iii) a different working culture from that of a given refugee's country of origin; and (iv) obstacles associated with the way in which the Swedish labour market is structured (Diedrich et al. 2020; citing Delmi 2015; Graham and Soininen 1998; Lundh and Ohlsson 1999; Riksrevisionen 2015). There may also be problems arising from previous trauma, legislation, bureaucracies, financial constraints, language proficiency (Ganassin and Johnstone Young 2020), as well as issues recognising previous education, qualifications, and skills (Von Cina and Marin 2019). The time consuming process of asylum and re-accreditation may also lead to a depreciation of skills and human capital (Bevelander 2020, 1).

This article presents a qualitative study of the labour market integration paths of recent refugees to Sweden by examining the structural landscape with which highly-skilled refugees come into contact, and the knowledgeable agency they are able to acquire. Understanding what comprises these paths, including the constraints and opportunities that exist in this landscape through which they navigate in order to gain employment, provides knowledge useful for improving labour market integration in the future and an important context to previous quantitative studies (see e.g., Ruiz and Vargas-Silva 2016; Ruiz and Vargas-Silva 2018). In addition to being important for the individuals involved, this is also relevant in countries such as Sweden, where efforts are made to find solutions to other issues, such as the ageing population and shortages of working professionals (Simic et al. 2018, 54).

This article focuses on highly-skilled refugees, defined here as those who have had their asylum applications approved, have received a residence permit (temporary or permanent), and have completed a tertiary education or higher. In Sweden this includes so-called refugees, resettled/quota refugees, and those in need of subsidiary protection who have fled from, among other things, armed conflict (*alternativt skyddsbehövande*).[1] This focus has been chosen not only because of the limited research, funding, and attention regarding highly-skilled migrants (see van Riemsdijk and Wang 2017, 2; see Swedish Government Offices 2020a, 2020b), but also because these highly-skilled migrants are conceivably those closest to the labour market upon arrival and thus possess a great potential to quickly attain their labour market goals and acquire employment in the receiving society.

The theoretical focus of the article deploys the concepts of 'structural landscape' and 'knowledgeable agency' within the context of refugee labour market integration paths. It thus hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the employment acquisition process in respect to the capacity for informed agency. The focus on personal agency and initiative, which previous studies on migrant integration have often overlooked (Mavrommatis 2018) hopes to shed light on how they make informed decisions regarding entry to the labour market.

In order to discuss these issues, the article focuses on the following three questions. First, what constitutes the labour market integration paths of highly-skilled refugees in Sweden? Second, what types of actors and initiatives, such as programmes, institutions, and organisations, are present on these paths? And, third, how does this structural landscape, in terms of opportunities and constraints, influence the labour market paths of highly-skilled refugees?

The following section will give an overview over the concepts, materials and methods used in the study. This is followed by results, which are divided into separate sections. First, the structural landscape which highly-skilled refugees' come into contact with on the labour market is mapped out. Second, the opportunities and constraints on the career paths are discussed, with regards to four

subthemes: unclear career paths and path gaps; guides and knowledgeable agents; the Establishment Programme and the official path; and laws, regulations, time and space. Lastly, the study results are discussed in a concluding section.

Concepts, materials and methods

As noted above, this article is conceptually framed by theoretical concepts; that of 'structural landscape' and 'knowledgeable agency'. The notion of structural landscape is informed by previous ideas of societal structures (cf. Giddens 1979), but is a new term that has been coined during the analysis for this paper. The term has been chosen in order to better visualise the presence of multiple labour market paths and the complexity of the labour market integration infrastructure, which is made up of many different institutions and actors through which highly-skilled refugees move. The structures within this landscape comprise 'both formal organisations such as government agencies, corporations, and voluntary bodies and broader sets of habits, rules and values that structure people's actions' (Mackinnon 2020, 349). Knowledge of these structures is essential for gaining a better understanding of the steps towards obtaining employment, along with the opportunities and constraints that may be present. The structures are also inhabited by agents, including highly-skilled refugees entering the labour market and the individuals working at initiatives with whom they come into contact. These agents perform actions and make choices within these structures, exercise agency, and are influenced by these structures even as they play an integral part in their creation (cf. Giddens 1979). Agency is associated with being able to influence one's career path, making 'decisions and actions in life' (Goller and Harteis 2017, 85,87), and possessing the 'capacity to 'act' and 'have an impact on your surroundings' (Cloke, Crang, and Goodwin 2013, 919). I view agency here as something that can be constrained or enabled (cf. Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010; Elder, Johnson, and Crosnoe 2003; Giddens 1984). Those agents who experience more severe constraints as they navigate through 'landscapes of opportunity and constraint' enjoy different, if not fewer, opportunities to influence and change the power relations within which they are embedded (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2010, 229).

The analysis has also been specifically conducted with the concept knowledgeable agency in mind, which is employed in respect to how an agent must possess a considerable amount of knowledge about how a given society works, including the structures within it, in order to be able to navigate through this landscape (cf. Giddens 1979, 255; previous studies have highlighted refugee access to information without using this term; see e.g., Oduntan and Ruthven 2020; Sontag 2018). If an individual does not possess sufficient knowledge concerning such structures, it is difficult to make informed choices and participate in society as an active agent. Not possessing the knowledge necessary to navigate a certain part of the structure does not mean that an agent is generally unknowledgeable—merely that they may not have knowledge about that specific context. This focus on the knowledge needed to exercise agency within certain structures highlights refugee agency, which is frequently minimised or overlooked (Cole 2020). It also acknowledges that a given structure can make it more or less challenging to exercise agency. The combination of these two concepts allows for an analysis that takes into consideration the conceptual interaction between knowledgeable agency and the structural landscape as well as potential conflict or symbiosis between them.

The empirical material analysed in this article consists of documents, reports, web pages and videos produced by actors who provide initiatives that aid new arrivals in finding their way onto the labour market. I also conducted thirty-three semi-structured interviews with labour market integration actors, as shown in Table 1. Interviewees included representatives of labour market training programmes, Swedish courses, internship and mentor programmes, and various municipal programmes. They possess expertise concerning the inner workings of the organisations in question, and many of them have an overview of the participants' labour market issues and paths regarding the various activities they offer. I also conducted observations at three job fairs, one information day for people with a foreign education, and informational webinars and events that catered to

Table 1. Interviewees.

Person interviewed	Type of initiative/activity	Role	Type of organisation
P1, P2	Swedish course	School principal (1); teacher (2)	School
P3	Mentor programme	Working environment and integration investigator	Volunteer organisation
P4	Labour market training programme	Coordinator	University
P5	Labour market integration network	Regional project leader	Non-profit
P6	Fast track	Course coordinator	University
P7	Mentor programme	Founder	Non-profit
P8, P9	Network for refugees; labour market training programme	Founder; project leader	Non-profit
P10	Internship programme	Teacher and mentor for mentors	University
P11	Labour market training programme	Administrator	Government Agency
P12	Labour market training programme	Project leader	Non-profit
P13	Financial aid for new arrivals	Social worker	Municipality
P14	Advocacy, information gathering	Business policy expert	Volunteer organisation
P15	Early initiatives for asylum seekers	Integration developer	County Administrative Board
P16	Informational initiatives, advocacy, educational initiatives	Administrator competence maintenance, work environment	Volunteer organisation
P17	Coordination, reports	Integration coordinator	Municipality
P18	Coordination, planning	Labour market manager	Municipality
P19	Labour market training programme	Project leader	Company
P20	Mentor programme	Project leader	Non-profit
P21	Labour market programme	Project leader, administrator	Municipality
P22	Labour market programme	Responsible manager	Company
P23	Labour market network	Regional head	Non-profit
P24	Labour market work	High administrative official	Government
P25	Skills supplier	Language developer	Association
P26	Internship programme	Communicator	Academy
P27	Internship programme	Project leader	Academy
P28	Language programme	Study and job counsellor	Municipality in collaboration with other actors
P29	Labour market programmes and coordination	Project coordinator	Government agency
P30	Internship programme	Recruiter	Company
P31, P32	Complementary education	Education officers	University
P33	Coordination of efforts for highly-skilled new arrivals, including internship and mentor programme	Project coordinator	Volunteer organisation
P34	Labour market training programme	Project leader	Non-profit
P35, P36	Network for refugees; various integration programmes	Activity leaders	Non-profit
P37	Mentor programme	Organiser, mentor manager	Non-profit

labour market integration of new arrivals. These observations provided an overview of the types of initiatives that exist, along with information about how specific initiatives are organised in order to provide people with employment. The multimethod approach of combining document analysis, interviews and observations was done in order to get a better overview and understanding of the structural landscape, the potential possible labour market paths, and the opportunities and constraints that exist within it. Multimethod qualitative approaches are also useful for enhancing validity or illuminating different perspectives (Natow 2019).

The analysis and coding was informed by the theoretical concepts of structural landscape and knowledgeable agency. The analysis involved a mapping of the structural landscape of refugee labour market paths, including actors that play significant roles on paths towards employment in Sweden for highly-skilled refugees. Various obstacles and opportunities were also identified and analysed. NVivo 12 was used to code the interviews for commonly occurring themes, initiatives, labour market integration paths, and the opportunities and constraints identified for refugees

seeking employment in Sweden. Preliminary results were discussed with an advisory board consisting of two highly-skilled refugees and four integration initiative representatives. The board members shared their reflections of the results on the basis of their own experiences, which provided valuable feedback for this article.

Permission was obtained from the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (2019-05330) to collect empirical data for this study. Informed consent was ensured by giving participants written and oral information about the research aims and how the collected material would be used. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw their consent if they wished.

Results

The structural landscape of refugee labour market integration

Sweden has a plethora of actors and initiatives that shape highly-skilled refugee labour market integration paths. The actors who in our case play an important role at the beginning of one's labour market path include the Swedish Council for Higher Education (*Universitets- och högskolerådet*/UHR), which provides recognition and assessment of qualifications and may be contacted even before receiving a residence permit. Moreover, the Swedish Public Employment Service (*Arbetsförmedlingen*/SPES) is a key agency that can be contacted after a residence permit has been granted. SPES's role is defined in legal terms in the Act on the Responsibility for Settlement Measures for Some Newly Arrived Immigrants (SFS 2017:584), which states that refugees who have been granted a residence permit have the right to take part in the Establishment Programme (*Etableringsprogrammet*) that SPES offers (Bešić, Diedrich, and Aigner 2021). SPES is responsible for providing services that 'aim to facilitate and accelerate [recent immigrants'] establishment in working life and society' (SFS 2017:584, 4§). These services are to be 'individually designed', and migrants are offered support and guidance while being expected to actively seek employment and be active agents throughout the employment process. The individual appointed case advisors help individuals plan which initiatives to join in order to 'learn Swedish and find a job' 'as quickly as possible' (Swedish Public Employment Service 2022a).

Even though SPES is in charge of labour market integration, labour market integration initiatives and activities are offered by a range of independent actors, or SPES-contracted vendors, both public and private. These include non-profit organisations; companies; municipalities and other government agencies (Bešić, Diedrich, and Aigner 2021, referencing Diedrich 2017; Diedrich and Hellgren 2018; Qvist 2017); trade unions; and educational institutions that host certain programmes. Initiatives include fast-tracks for migrants with specific professions, labour market training, internship and mentor programmes, matching services, language programmes such as Swedish for immigrants or specialised intensive language courses for foreign academics, and civic orientation courses. SPES negotiates contracts with vendors to provide services, and the individual contracts stipulate when specific companies offer particular initiatives. Vendors may change insofar as the contracts are time-limited (Swedish Public Employment Service 2019, 8), and the same service may be offered by multiple vendors at the same or different times (see e.g., the Swedish Public Employment Service search tool Sök leverantör [Search for vendor] which shows all the different vendors offering matching services in Sweden).

This web of actors creates a number of pathway possibilities, with some actors catering to a specific professional background. Career paths are individual insofar as they involve unique individuals, preferences, skill sets, and professional backgrounds. Initiatives also exist for specific professions or backgrounds—such as fast tracks taught in Arabic, language classes for teachers, and internship programmes for engineers. One's specific profession may also add steps on the career path, such as obtaining a license to practice (medical and teaching licenses, for example, are obtained from the National Board of Health and Welfare [*Socialstyrelsen*] and the Swedish National

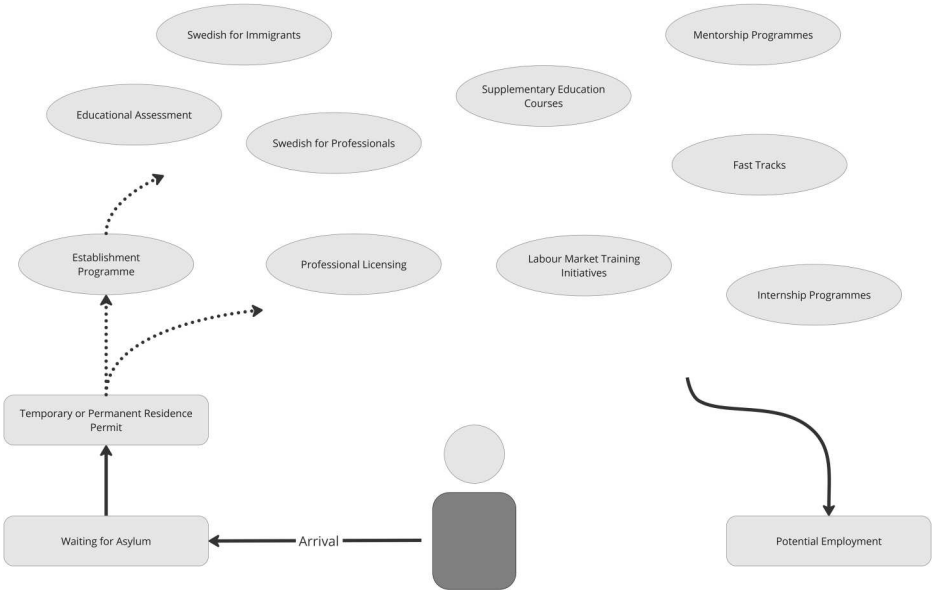

Figure 1. The structural landscape of refugee labour market integration.

Agency for Education [*Skolverket*] respectively). Moreover, labour market paths are affected by each geographical context, as different kinds of initiatives exist in different geographical locations.

Individual labour market integration paths are typically illustrated as a straight line (see e.g., Kristianstad Municipality 2022) or presented in a unidirectional manner, which is useful for purposes of clarity on informational websites (see e.g., the website Vägen till jobben). In reality, however, they are much more complex and involve multiple fields, jobs experiences, and career changes. Individuals may also wish to develop new skills, leading to a non-linear, ongoing, and ever-changing labour market path. Figure 1 and Table 2 provide an overview of the actors and initiatives highly-skilled refugees often encounter on their labour market paths.

The structural landscape of career opportunity and constraint

The structural landscape of the career paths, described above, creates opportunities as well as constraints for highly-skilled refugees within that landscape, which will be discussed in the next sections. These opportunities and constraints may make it either easier or more challenging to exercise one's knowledgeable agency.

Table 2. Types of integration initiatives and actors.

Examples of initiatives	Examples of actors involved
The Establishment Programme	Swedish Public Employment Service [SPES]
Swedish for immigrants	Municipalities
Swedish for professionals	Municipality, municipality membership organisations, county administrative boards
Recognition and assessment of foreign qualifications	Swedish Council for Higher Education
Professional licensing for regulated professions	Different actors for different professions, e.g., the Swedish National Agency for Education for teachers and pre-school teachers, the National Board of Health and Welfare for health care professions, or the Swedish Bar Association for lawyers.
Supplementary education courses	Educational institutions
Fast tracks for specific professions	SPES, trade union organisations, employer organisations
Labour market training initiatives	Private and public vendors (e.g., contracted by SPES); non-profits
Mentor programmes	Non-profits, trade union organisations, employers
Internship programmes	Trade union organisations, employers, expert organisations

Unclear career paths and path gaps

Many of these actors and initiatives, such as labour market and internship programmes, provide the majority of participants with opportunities by connecting them to employers and workplaces. Several initiatives report employment rates varying from about 33% to 70% of participants successfully gaining employment (P26, P27; P34; P37).[2] It is also possible that internship contacts are used as references to gain employment later. Furthermore, the multitude of actors and initiatives makes it possible to fill certain gaps and needs due to the many different possibilities, paths, and programmes offered. For example, one can take a specialised path and participate in programmes that are provided for a particular target group, such as fast-tracks for specific engineering professions or labour market courses offered in a language other than Swedish.

Yet the complex structural landscape may also make it difficult to make choices on the labour market path due to the multitude of actors and steps involved and the many possible paths. An example is the lack of clarity on the path towards a teaching career, which can include paying twice[3] to apply for a teaching license—once early on simply to receive information about how to complement one's existing teaching degree. Many teachers do not know about this, and end up applying for their license very late —sometimes after having taken more supplementary education courses than necessary since they do not know which courses they need:

> But there we realised, when we mapped it, that these individuals don't get their assessment until very late in the process. [—] And then maybe they have over-studied a lot [of courses] or needed to drag on for a very long time before they get a reply from the Swedish National Agency for Education. [—] But then we think, then it's difficult because the Swedish National Agency for Education charge a fee, quite frankly, for this assessment. So for this group you have to first pay a fee to get an assessment and then maybe two years later when everything, [when they] are actually applying for the license, then pay the same fee again (P16, all citations translated by author).

These types of situations contribute to longer and circuitous paths to employment in terms of both the time involved, resources needed, and the number of steps taken.

The multitude of initiatives also renders career paths unclear since it is difficult to know which initiative best suits one's needs. A representative from a Swedish course remarks, in an interview conducted in 2020, that even though the overabundance of initiatives can create positive opportunities for participants, it nevertheless has clearly negative aspects:

> But [there being many initiatives] can also be confusing for the students. We have students who take our programme and then hear about [another fast-track], and they think, oh, it's probably better. (…) And then they quit our programme, change to [another fast-track], and realise that, oh, it's basically the same thing (P1).

Another representative (P2) maintains that several of their participants returned to their courses after having tried other labour market programmes. It is likely that participants did not know in advance what programmes were best for them or what they involved, which led to jumping back and forth between them. As a result, although there are opportunities to exercise agency, choose and take part in many different initiatives, some may be quite similar to others, making a clear path less obvious. This may also create competition between initiatives for the same participants (P1). These findings show how obstacles to employment may result from the multitude of actors that exist in the structural landscape.

A lack of clarity due to the plethora of initiatives in the structural landscape is also evident in what I call 'path gaps', that is, the time between initiatives. An official report evaluating fast-tracks for teachers identifies 'the gap' (*mellanrummet*). This is the period after finishing the labour market training programme when participants must wait before they can begin the complementary teacher's education that is necessary for obtaining a teaching license. Swedish proficiency acquired from the labour market training programme is not sufficient to begin the complementary programme, which makes additional Swedish courses necessary. Reports state that this interval can not only be confusing for participants but also for those working in the programmes. Conversations with school principals and participants revealed that there was uncertainty concerning the question

of responsibility during the 'gap period' (*mellanrummet*) and the possible solutions for employment and Swedish studies available to participants (Blomberg and Åström n.d, 7, translation by author).

In addition to making the career path confusing, these path gaps may also contribute to a loss of momentum. Waiting can be caused by administrative factors, such as time involved in the sign-up process at SPES before one can begin searching for employment (P17). Similarly, participants may need to retake certain courses or programmes (P17), and passing a course from one initiative may still not reflect the language level needed for the next initiative along the career path (P1).

> And that's a pity, above all for the students. Because they take one step forward and two steps back all the time. What was supposed to be so fast just takes longer and longer. And instead of learning from start to finish, you have to start over all the time and fill in the holes and improve yourself on your own, and all of that (P1).

Path gaps are also created during unwanted waiting times between initiatives, where the consecutive steps needed to proceed on one's career path do not align properly:

> Adult education regulations state (…) you can enter the programme throughout the year. And that means that people leave adult education courses even in the middle of October or July, and then maybe the application deadline for the coming university semester has passed. [… .] But this, that you can find yourself having to wait eight, nine months before the next possible course start, I think that's terrible, to be honest. (P21).

This interviewee also reflected on how this can make programmes lose participants, making it conceivable that participants go on to do something else during such waiting periods, perhaps even taking a job outside of their field because of the need to financially support themselves. The lack of clear knowledge about the initiatives, together with long waiting periods between them, can thus influence the choices made on the career path.

Guides and knowledgeable agents

The lack of clarity noted above, including the complexity of the structural landscape, also creates a constraint related to the lack of knowledge and guidance. This is the case when a participant, or even a programme organiser, does not know what the next step should be for a participant (Blomberg and Åström n.d.). This highlights the need for relevant knowledge, education, and guidance concerning how to proceed through this structural landscape.

While there is a significant degree of freedom due to the possibility of choosing between many initiatives, interviewees mentioned the lack of and need for a guiding red thread through the integration process as a whole:

> (…) [I]t is [important] that there is a red thread from [integration] efforts during the asylum period that then can be connected with those efforts which are offered during the establishment phase. And that you see that there is a clear chain. (P15)

This thread would start at the very beginning of the asylum process so that people know what to do as soon as they are granted asylum, and participating in educational programmes could play an important role in this regard by leading to a smoother labour market path (P15). As it is now, individuals have to 'keep track of a lot by themselves' when seeking employment (presupposing their possibility for agency), even though this role should be the responsibility of other labour market actors (P18).

Moreover, if one does not know what steps to take in order to move forward, they may 'fall through the cracks' (P18, '*faller mellan stolarna*'):

> We talk about people who fall between the cracks (*faller mellan stolarna*), of course, where we see that the system doesn't cover [gaps]– we talk quite often about the need for knowledge about the others' responsibilities, and roles and activities. You need to know quite a lot in order to be able to collaborate well. We talk quite a lot about one way in and the need for coordination. (P18)

This phrase was used about people within the present structural framework who are not caught by 'the system' and become lost on the labour market path, but it also is evident that

people working within the labour market integration structures need a significant amount of knowledge about the structural landscape (P18). This illustrates the difficulty in gaining enough knowledge to make informed decisions as an agent on the labour market path, along with the importance of access to competent guidance when needed in order to make informed labour market choices.

The Establishment Programme and the official path

One possible guide on the labour market path is the SPES, which offers the Establishment Programme. It provides opportunities that assist participants in attaining their labour market goals, giving information and access to initiatives provided by vendors that have been contracted for this purpose by the SPES. Participation also provides access to financial aid.

The Programme is not compulsory, and in principle refugees can choose their own path to employment. The Programme is nevertheless strongly encouraged, often being presented as the only correct way forward in official informational material. This 'official' labour market path is not a firm rule, but is communicated through official channels and pushed to such an extent that some may not even know the 'unofficial' alternative paths open to them. This can contribute to a lack of knowledge about the other paths that are available:

> There's a belief that I think is very unfortunate. It's that you first have to be an asylum seeker, then you become a new arrival (*nyanländ*). And then you enter the Establishment Programme, and then you should learn Swedish. And then you can potentially have an internship. And then you maybe will get a job after that. And this whole basic idea, that there's only one path, the public authorities urge the person in this direction, and that's all the information we have. I think that's very unfortunate. Because I think there are few asylum seekers who get to know that they can work as soon as they come to Sweden. Period. And you can work within your profession. You're free to do so (P3).

The view that there is one 'correct path', through the Establishment Programme, constrains an individual's choices simply because they are not informed about other possibilities. Some individuals may not necessarily need to take all these steps in order to gain employment, since they can gain employment through different channels such as directly contacting an employer and seeking employment upon arrival. This may be the case in professions where English is a commonly used language (such as engineering, see Apelman 2010). There is some support for this comprising a good way into the workplace, since one of the existing internship programmes for new arrivals with one of the highest employment rates does not require Swedish proficiency to participate (P27). The fact that authorities communicate one path more clearly than others may discourage knowing how to navigate through non-official pathways and make informed choices along the way.

Participants may also be constrained due to rules associated with the Establishment Programme. Many labour market training programmes require that you are registered at SPES, and finding other alternatives may be difficult for refugees who have limited professional networks (Rydgren 2006). This means that it can be difficult to follow other labour market integration paths. Reliance on financial aid may also render other types of active choices more tasking, and there are constraints due to certain stipulations and programme rules. For example, participants need to submit a monthly progress report, be on time for all scheduled activities, and not miss meetings with case officers or initiatives in which they participate. In addition, they must 'apply for the jobs and educational programmes that [they] have been requested to apply for' (Swedish Public Employment Service 2022a). SPES also stipulates that the individual must accept any jobs that they are offered, regardless of their own qualifications and the nature of the job. This can at times prevent individuals from applying to positions more suited to their qualifications and interests. Moreover, not adhering to these rules may lead to losing the right to participate in the Programme and 'risk leaving you without financial compensation' (Swedish Public Employment Service 2022a) – '[a]s long as you follow the plan [set up for you], you have right to the financial compensation' (P13).

Laws, regulations, time, and space

Other opportunities and constraints are associated with having refugee status, including the rules and structures pertaining to the legal and regulatory frameworks that can influence one's labour market outcomes (cf. Ganassin and Johnstone Young 2020), decisions, and actions. An individual with refugee status may be assigned to a municipality and given an offer of accommodation in a certain location, which comes with the right to financial aid. Moving to a municipality is optional, but not accepting an offer may result in losing the right to both accommodation and financial support (Swedish Migration Agency 2022), which can be difficult to obtain otherwise. If an offer is accepted, one's labour market path is dependent on the jobs and initiatives available in the geographically assigned area. In addition, different areas have different numbers and types of initiatives. SPES fast-track vendors, at least initially, also existed only in a few limited locations, meaning that not everybody could participate due to long travel times and a limited amount of spots available (Häggblom and Martinson 2021, 20).

Specific laws also affect labour market integration paths in indirect ways. They constitute an important element of the complexity and time-specificity of the labour market path and structural landscape, and can influence choices on the career path. For example, the Act on Temporary Restrictions to the Possibility to Receive a Residence Permit in Sweden (SFS 2016:752), valid 2016–2019 and prolonged with some changes until July 2021, stipulated that temporary residence permits, rather than permanent, became the norm. The Aliens Act (SFS 2005:716) was amended in June 2021 in accordance with many of the same points as this temporary act. The new Aliens Act provides for temporary residence permits of 13 months or 3 years followed by temporary residence permits of 2 years until the requirements for permanent residency have been met (Swedish Government Offices 2021, 58, 60). These requirements include 'being able to earn a living' (66). If one arrived in Sweden when permanent residency was given, one could conceivably afford to spend a longer time seeking employment in order to find a job that matches one's qualifications, rather than having to focus on gaining security through permanent residency.

Other constraints relate to time, such as where the vendors have short-term contracts and programmes change. Which initiatives one comes into contact with depends on the specific vendors and initiatives available during a given period of time, as well as place. Initiatives funded for a fixed number of years may no longer be offered in certain locations. In addition, a person may participate in the Swedish Establishment Programme for a total of 24 months, and participation needs to take place within 36 months of receiving a Swedish identification number (Swedish Public Employment Service 2022b). Assistance is no longer offered when this period has ended.

Time and space thus comprise an important element in determining the particular opportunities and constraints that affect refugees. They may face legal and regulatory constraints to a greater degree than other population groups, who do not risk returning to a conflict or persecution zone if they do not gain permanent residency and employment.

Discussion and conclusion

The analysis has shown that the labour market integration paths of highly-skilled refugees in Sweden are complex, multifaceted, and non-linear. The structural landscape includes many different actors and initiatives, and job-seekers can change initiatives or re-take courses on their way to employment. The agents must navigate more through a web than a clearly marked path, and there is no one clear way forward.

How a refugee migrant manoeuvres through this complex structural landscape depends on the agent's own circumstances and background, as well as time and space, rules and legislation, and the existence of clear information and guidance along the way. The career path and the choices available are also shaped by opportunities and constraints associated with the complexity of the structural landscape. The landscape not only creates opportunities for finding employment and

establishing employer connections but also comes into conflict with highly-skilled refugees' knowledgeable agency. This could be seen in the examples showcasing the difficulty in knowing about unofficial labour market paths, the confusion about what to do during path gaps, and the instances when programme participants jumped back and forth between similar initiatives.

The existence of many initiatives allows refugees to exercise their agency, choosing and customising their own path in a way corresponding to their needs. However, even when the capacity for agency exists, this agency may not comprise *knowledgeable* agency since the structural landscape, rules, regulations, and circumstances constituting it are complex, ever-changing, and diffuse. The complex structural landscape presupposes that refugee agents possess substantial amounts of knowledge regarding the existing initiatives and which choices best suit them, and have information about the Establishment Programme path and its rules, other paths, and legal frameworks. Refugees may be constrained not because of a lack of agency, but because of a lack of knowledge about the structural landscape and forms of selectivity. The constantly changing initiatives and regulations also create difficulties in how to proceed, not least during path gaps and waiting periods that emerge. This holds true for highly-skilled refugees, as well as for agents within existing organisations who are themselves unsure about participants' best ways forward (e.g., Blomberg and Åström n.d.). Although the latter agents are not as affected by this as the job seekers, they must possess a good overview of the multitude of career paths in order to help refugees find their way through the structural landscape.

Refugees, however, are in addition affected by other factors which influence their labour market path and make obtaining employment even more challenging, such as trauma, a lack of networks, and financial issues (see e.g., Andersson and Hammarstedt 2015; De los Reyes and Kamali 2005; Delmi 2015; Diedrich et al. 2020, 5; Knocke 2000; Segendorf and Teljosuo 2011; SOU 2003:75). These factors can make the impact and degree of being an unknowledgeable agent more severe.

The results of this article add to existing literature by contextualising previous quantitative studies (e.g., Ruiz and Vargas-Silva 2016; Ruiz and Vargas-Silva 2018). Moreover, they provide an overview over specifically how the structural landscape may cause longer labour market paths (cf. Bevelander 2020; Brell, Dustmann, and Preston 2020), in addition to factors such as lack of social networks (Diedrich et al. 2020; Statistics Sweden 2019; citing Andersson and Hammarstedt 2015; Bevelander 2011; Segendorf and Teljosuo 2011), and depreciation of skills (Bevelander 2020, 1).

The results suggest that clarity regarding the makeup of the structural landscape as well as clear channels of information could make labour market integration paths more effective. This could minimise constraints on the agency of highly-skilled refugees and provide individuals with the conditions necessary for them to exercise their agency as knowledgeable members of the structures they help create, of which they are a part, and within which they act.

Focusing on knowledgeable agency proves to be useful for highlighting the importance of clear and reliable information and the constraints and opportunities structural landscapes can create. Studying agents' knowledge of their structural landscape provides a better understanding of the changes needed to facilitate agency and freedom of choice for different professionals in different places and times. Moving forward, the voices of highly-skilled refugees need to be taken into account to better understand potential exclusionary processes and promote understanding of the structures and the agents involved in labour market integration processes.

Notes

1. Previous research acknowledges that these categories can be problematic due to perceived hierarchies among migrants (see e.g. Koskela 2014) and negative connotations of 'low-skilled' (Bulat 2019). The categories are not clear-cut, and do not necessarily coincide with people's identities.
2. More information is however needed about what kind of employment the participants have received.
3. At present this costs 1500SEK, not including documentation translation costs.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all informants for their participation. Thank you also to Heike Jöns, Micheline van Riemsdijk, Johan Jansson, Gijs H. Westra, the colleagues at the Department of Human Geography, Uppsala University, and the visiting scholars at the Institute of European Studies, University of California, Berkeley, for their helpful feedback on the article. I would also like to thank the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, and The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for grants that have made this research possible.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research was funded in whole or in part by Forte [2019-01220]. For the purpose of Open Access, the author has applied a CC BY public copyright licence to any Author Accepted Manuscript version arising from this submission.

ORCID

Ioanna Blasko http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2544-4842

References

Ager, A., and A. Strang. 2008. "Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21 (2): 166–191. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016.

Andersson, L., and M. Hammarstedt. 2015. "Ethnic Enclaves, Networks and Self-Employment among Middle Eastern Immigrants in Sweden." *International Migration* 53 (6): 27–40. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2011.00714.x.

Apelman, V. 2010. *English at Work. The Communicative Situation of Engineers*. Göteborg: University of Gothenburg. Licentiate Thesis.

Bešić, A., A. Diedrich, and P. Aigner. 2021. "Organising Labour Market Integration Support for Refugees in Austria and Sweden during the Covid-19 Pandemic." *Comparative Migration Studies* 9 (1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-021-00264-y.

Bevelander, P. 2011. "The Employment Integration of Resettled Refugees, Asylum Claimants, and Family Reunion Migrants in Sweden." *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 30 (1): 22–43. https://doi.org/10.1093/rsq/hdq041.

Bevelander, P. 2020. "Integrating Refugees into Labor Markets." *IZA World of Labor* 269 (2). https://doi.org/10.15185/izawol.269.v2.

Blomberg, G. O., and A. Åström. n.d. "Särskilda främjande- och utvecklingsinsatser i syfte att påskynda nynanländas etablering på arbetsmarknaden inom ramen för snabbspår för nyanlända lärare och förskollärare." [Special Support and Development Initiatives for Quickening of Newly Arrived Establishment on the Labour Market within Fast tracks for Newly Arrived Teachers and Preschool Teachers] Final report. Stockholm University, Sektionen för uppdragsamordning.

Brell, C., C. Dustmann, and I. Preston. 2020. "The Labor Market Integration of Refugee Migrants in High-Income Countries." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 34 (1): 94–121. https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.34.1.94.

Bulat, A. 2019. "'High-Skilled Good, Low-Skilled Bad?' British, Polish and Romanian Attitudes Towards Low-Skilled EU Migration." *National Institute Economic Review* 248 (1): R49–R57. https://doi.org/10.1177/002795011924800113.

Calmfors, L., and N. Sánchez-Gassen, eds. 2019. *Integrating Immigrants into the Nordic Labour Markets*. Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Ministers.

Cloke, P., P. Crang, and M. Goodwin. 2013. *Introducing Human Geographies* . 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.

Coe, N. M., and D. C. Jordhus-Lier. 2010. "Re-embedding the Agency of Labour." In *Missing Links in Labour Geography*, edited by A. C. Bergene, S. B. Endresen, and H. M. Knutsen, 29–42. London: Routledge.

Cole, P. 2020. "Framing the Refugee." *Etikk i Praksis* 14 (2): 35–51. https://doi.org/10.5324/eip.v14i2.3489.

Delmi. 2015. *"Integration och arbetsmarknad." [Integration and Labour Market] Delmi kunskapsöversikt 2015:3*. Stockholm: Delmi.

Delmi. 2018. *Förvärvsarbete bland utrikes födda som beviljats uppehållstillstånd av skyddsskäl (1997–2016). [Gainful Employment Among Foreign-Born Who have Received Residency on the Basis of Protection]*. Stockholm: Delmi.

De los Reyes, P., and M. Kamali, eds. 2005. *Bortom vi och dem. Teoretiska reflektioner om makt, integration och strukturell diskriminering*. [Beyond us and them.Theoretical Reflections on Power, Integration and Structural Discrimination]. SOU 2005:41. Stockholm: Regeringskansliet.

Diedrich, A. 2017. "Validation of Immigrants' Prior Foreign Learning as a Framing Practice." *European Management Journal* 35 (6): 729–736. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2017.05.008.

Diedrich, A., O. Bergström, A. Rosberg, and N. Simonsson. 2020. *"Integration av nyanlända på arbetsmarknaden." [Integration of New Arrivals on the Labour Market] Forskning i korthet 15. Forte*. Stockholm: AJ E-print AB.

Diedrich, A., and H. Hellgren. 2018. *Organizing Labour Market Integration of Foreign-Born Persons in the Gothenburg Metropolitan Area*. Göteborg: Gothenburg Research Institute.

Elder, G. H., Jr., M. K. Johnson, and R. Crosnoe. 2003. "The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory." In *Handbook of the Life Course*, edited by J. T. Mortimer and M. J. Shanahan, 3–22. New York: Springer.

Eurostat. 2016. *Asylum in the EU Member States. Record Number of Over 1.2 Million First Time Asylum Seekers Registered in 2015. Syrians, Afghans and Iraqis: Top Citizenships*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

Fasani, F., T. Frattini, and L. Minale. 2022. "(The Struggle for) Refugee Integration into the Labour Market: Evidence from Europe." *Journal of Economic Geography* 22 (2): 351–393. https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbab011.

Federico, V., and S. Baglioni, eds. 2021. *Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers' Integration in European Labour Markets. A Comparative Approach on Legal Barriers and Enablers*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Ganassin, S., and T. Johnstone Young. 2020. "From Surviving to Thriving: 'Success Stories' of Highly Skilled Refugees in the UK." *Language and Intercultural Communication* 20 (2): 125–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2020.1731520.

Giddens, A. 1979. *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. London: Macmillan.

Giddens, A. 1984. "Elements of Theory of Structuration." *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Goller, M., and C. Harteis. 2017. "Human Agency at Work: Towards a Clarification and Operationalisation of the Concept." In *Agency at Work. An Agentic Perspective on Professional Learning Development*, edited by M. Goller, and S. Paloniemi, 85–103. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Graham, M., and M. Soininen. 1998. "A Model for Immigrants? The Swedish Corporate Model and the Prevention of Ethnic Discrimination." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 24 (3): 523–539. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.1998.9976648.

Häggblom, J., and S. Martinson. 2021. "På spåret? Om snabbspåret för nyanlända med bristyrken." [On track? About the Fast Track for Newly Arrived with Shortage Professions]. IFAU 2021:11. Uppsala: Ehof Grafiska.

Knocke, W. 2000. "Integration or Segregation? Immigrant Populations Facing the Labour Market in Sweden." *Economic and Industrial Democracy* 21 (3): 361–380. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143831X00213005.

Koskela, K. 2014. "Boundaries of Belonging: Highly-Skilled Migrants and the Migrant Hierarchy in Finland." *Journal of Finnish Studies* 17 (1-2): 19–41. Special issue on highly-skilled migration and Finland, edited by Driss Habti and Saara Koikkalainen. https://doi.org/10.5406/28315081.17.1.2.03.

Kristianstad Municipality. 2022. "Så fungerar mottagandet av flyktingar." [How Refugee Reception Works]. Accessed March 30 2022. https://www.kristianstad.se/sv/omsorg-och-hjalp/invandring-och-integration/flyktingsituationen.

Lundh, C., and R. Ohlsson. 1999. *Från arbetskraftsimport till flyktinginvandring. [From Labour Import to Refugee Migration]*. Stockholm: SNS Förlag.

Mackinnon, D. 2020. "Institutionalism/Institutional Geographies." In *Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, edited by A. Kobayashi, 349–355. Second ed. Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Mavrommatis, G. 2018. "Grasping the Meaning of Integration in an Era of (Forced) Mobility: Ethnographic Insights from an Informal Refugee Camp." *Mobilities* 13 (6): 861–875. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2018.1500098.

Mesfin, Y. Z., and A. L. Mamuye. 2020. "Barriers of Labour Market Integration of Humanitarian Immigrants in Sweden." *African Journal of Governance and Development* 9 (1): 124–138. https://doi.org/10.10520/EJC-1ef27903ac.

Natow, R. S. 2019. "The Use of Triangulation in Qualitative Studies Employing Elite Interviews." *Qualitative Research* 20 (2): 160–173. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794119830077.

Oduntan, O., and I. Ruthven. 2020. "People and Places: Bridging the Information Gaps in Refugee Integration." *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 72 (1): 83–96. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24366.

Qvist, M. 2017. "Meta-governance and Network Formation in Collaborative Spaces of Uncertainty: The Case of Swedish Refugee Integration Policy." *Public Administration* 95 (2): 498–511. https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12310.

Riksrevisionen. 2015. *Nyanländas etablering: Är statens insatser effektiva? [Newly Arrived Estbalishment: Are the State Iniatives Effective?]. RiR 2015: 17*. Stockholm: Riksdagens Interntryckeri.

Ruiz, I., and C. Vargas-Silva. 2016. "The Labour Market Consequences of Hosting Refugees." *Journal of Economic Geography* 16 (3): 667–694. https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbv019.

Ruiz, I., and C. Vargas-Silva. 2018. "Differences in Labour Market Outcomes between Natives, Refugees and Other Migrants in the UK." *Journal of Economic Geography* 18 (4): 855–885. https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lby027.
Rydgren, J. 2006. "Mechanisms of Exclusion: Ethnic Discrimination in the Swedish Labour Market." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 30 (4): 697–716. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691830410001699522.
Segendorf, Å. O., and T. Teljosuo. 2011. *2011: 5. Sysselsättning för invandrare– en ESO rapport om arbetsmarknadsintegration. [Employment for immigrants - an ESO report on labour market integration]*. Stockholm: Regeringskansliet, Finansdepartementet.
SFS. 2005:716. *Utlänningslag.* [Aliens Act].
SFS. 2016:752. *Lag om tillfälliga begränsningar av möjligheten att få uppehållstillstånd i Sverige*. [Act on Temporary Limitations of the Possibility to Gain Residency in Sweden].
SFS. 2017:584. *Lag om ansvar för etableringsinsatser för vissa nyanlända invandrare.* [Act on the Responsibility for Settlement Measures for Some Newly Arrived Immigrants].
Simic, N., K. Marklund, A. Jönsson, H. Lagercrantz, C. Lagercrantz, D. Erichsen, J. Rask, J. Björkqvist, B. Kvaal, and A. Ólafsdòttir. 2018. *"Ny i norden. Vägen till arbete" [New in the Nordics. The Road to Employment]*. edited by Nina Simic. København: Nordiska ministerrådet.
Sontag, K. 2018. "Highly Skilled Asylum Seekers: Case Studies of Refugee Students at a Swiss University." *Migration Letters* 15 (4): 533–544. https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v15i4.5.
SOU. 2003:75. *Etablering i Sverige. Möjligheter och ansvar för individ och samhälle*. Stockholm: Fritzes.
Statistics Sweden. 2020. "Asylsökande i Sverige." [Asylum-Seekers in Sweden] Accessed January 10, 2022. https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/asylsokande-i-sverige/.
Statistics Sweden. 2021. "Sysselsättning bland flyktingar och deras anhöriga 2019." [Employment among Refugees and their Relatives] https://www.scb.se/contentassets/9cd5c4df33f742c79618bded4e732864/am0401_2021a01_br_am110sm2102.pdf.
Statistics Sweden. 2019. "Stora skillnader i sysselsättning mellan högutbildade utrikes och inrikes födda." [Large Differences in Employment between the Highly-Educated Foreign and Native-born]. Accessed January 10 2022. https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/utbildning-och-forskning/befolkningens-utbildning/hogutbildade-utrikes-fodda/pong/statistiknyhet/arbetsmarknaden-2018-for-hogutbildade-utrikes-fodda/
Swedish Government Offices. 2020a. "Satsningar för etablering av nyanlända och utrikes födda och samhällsintroduktion för asylsökande." [Efforts for Establishment of New Arrivals and Foreign Born and Civic Orientering for Asylum-seekers]. https://www.regeringen.se/pressmeddelanden/2020/09/satsningar-for
Swedish Government Offices. 2020b. "Förstärkt satsning för bland andra utrikes födda kvinnor till jobb och utbildning." [Increased Efforts for, among others Foreign-born Women, for Employment and Education]. https://www.regeringen.se/artiklar/2020/09/forstarkt-satsning-for-bland-andra-utrikes-fodda-kvinnor-till-jobb-och-utbildning/
Swedish Government Offices. 2021. "Ändrade regler i utlänningslagen." [Changed Rules in the Aliens Act]. https://www.regeringen.se/496b04/contentassets/fba5199a65f348269d82a8e6e146bda9/andrade-regler-i-utlanningslagen.pdf
Swedish Migration Agency. 2022. "Andra aktörer." [Other actors]. Accessed April 1 2022. https://www.migrationsverket.se/Andra-aktorer/Kommuner/Om-personer-med-uppehallstillstand/Bosattning-i-en-kommun.html
Swedish Public Employment Service. 2019. "Vissa förutsättningar inför reformeringen av Arbetsförmedlngen." [Some Conditions in Preparation for the Reform of the Swedish Public Employment Service]. Report.
Swedish Public Employment Service. 2022a. "Villkor för din ersättning i program." [Terms for your Compensation in Programmes]. https://arbetsformedlingen.se/for-arbetssokande/extra-stod/ersattning-och-franvaro/villkor-for-din-ersattning-i-program
Swedish Public Employment Service. 2022b. "Etableringsprogrammet." [The Establishment Programme]. https://arbetsformedlingen.se/for-arbetssokande/extra-stod/stod-a-o/etableringsprogrammet
Tinghög, P., A. Malm, C. Arwidson, E. Sigvardsdotter, A. Lundin, and F. Saboonchi. 2017. "Prevalence of Mental Ill Health, Traumas and Postmigration Stress Among Refugees from Syria Resettled in Sweden after 2011: A Population-based Survey." *BMJ Open* 2017 (7). http://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2017-018899.
van Riemsdijk, M., and L. Axelsson. 2021. "Introduction: Labour Market Integration of Highly Skilled Refugees in Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands." *International Migration* 59 (4): 3–12. https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12883.
van Riemsdijk, M., and Q. Wang. 2017. "Introduction: Rethinking International Skilled Migration. A Place-Based and Spatial Perspective." In *Rethinking International Skilled Migration*, edited by M. van Riemsdijk, and Qifang Wang, 1–16. London: Routledge.
Von Cina, B., and N. Marin. 2019. "What Issues do Refugees Race in Integrating into Labour Markets? Evidence from Slovenia." *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* 25 (1): 101–112. https://doi.org/10.1177/1024258918807388.
Wikström, E., and A. Sténs. 2019. "Problematising Refugee Migrants in the Swedish Forestry Sector." *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* 25 (1): 63–80. https://doi.org/10.1177/1024258919827133.